SCHOOL
FOR THE MINISTRY
Berkeley, California

The Cheerful Letter

Every place a church; every day the Lord's day; all events blessings; all joy thanksgiving; and all nature and life full of Good.—James Freeman Clarke.

Vol. XLII JULY - AUGUST, 1933 No. 2

ANNUAL REPORT OF SECRETARY OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE 1932 - 1933

As secretary of the Cheerful Letter Exchange, I have the privilege of presenting my annual report for the year, 1932-1933. During this period I have endeavored to perform all the duties incident to the office.

The year, just past, has presented to Alliance Branches throughout the country problems of a type and magnitude never before encountered in the memory of the oldest members. Just how the Cheerful Letter Exchange has triumphantly overcome adverse economic conditions it is the purpose of this report to show.

Eight regular meetings have been held at 25 Beacon Street, Boston, on the mornings of the first Fridays of the months from October to May inclusive. Despite several very stormy days the average attendance has been 49 with an average of 35 Branches represented. Sixty-two Branches have been represented at least once. At each of these meetings the chairman, Mrs. Harry A. Stevens, has presided in her gracious manner. Her sympathetic understanding of the problems of workers and her timely advice aptly given have had much to do with the success of the work. The president of the General Alliance and several of its other officers have honored the Exchange by their presence at some meetings.

We hold in grateful memory the names of the following Branch chairmen, who have been called home during the past year: Mrs. Jeptha Robinson of Santa Ana, California; Mrs. Ellsworth Stackpole of Fall River, Massachusetts; Miss Ida F. Wilkinson of Rochester, New Hampshire.

During the past year five members of the Central Committee have spoken before many Branches. It has been my observation that each Branch to which I have spoken has been stimulated to some definitely new endeavor. My experience is not unique. This is why it is wise for each group once in every few years to plan a *Cheerful Letter Day* with a speaker from Headquarters and why we officers are ready to co-operate to our utmost ability.

In her annual report, given at the regular May meeting Mrs. Stevens stresses the fact that the "constant planning both for the content and the financing" of the Cheerful Letter Magazine has resulted in what seems like "nothing less than a miracle so that the year closes with all bills paid and something left over toward our summer printing." She also states that the method of reporting apparently desperate cases of want among distant correspondents through Dr. Dexter's office to local welfare agencies has in the main been satisfactory. She pays a tribute to the work of Mrs. Sands, chairman of the Home Study Department, who because of ill health is resigning her office.

Mrs. William B. Nichols, in charge of the distribution of Bibles, announces that 104 have been sent. Because of the offer, published in the magazine, there are still many calls to be answered and she would appreciate help in filling them.

As Mrs. John A. McCaddin, chairman of the Committee on Correspondents and Appeals, states, her work consists in "systematizing the lists of names of the people with whom the various chairmen are in touch." The typewriter, which

Publication Office
134 Summer Street, Boston, Mass.

Monthly, except August
50 cents a year. Single copy, 5 cents

Check, post-office order, or stamps should be sent to the Cheerful Letter Exchange
25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

Entered as second-class matter at the post office at Boston, Mass.

"Acceptance for mailing at the special rate of postage provided for in Section 1103. Act of October 3, 1917, authorized July 17, 1922."

the Exchange was able to purchase, because of its share in the May meeting collection, has simplified this work and resulted in neat cards in the files. In assigning more than 100 new names this year Mrs. McCaddin has written to Branches in fifteen States, where there have been chairmen listed, who have never reported any correspondents to her. To encourage them to undertake definite work, she made her letters both appealing and practical. When a new correspondent is placed, a card headed with her name, bearing the name of the Branch to which she has been given, is placed in a file, while another card, headed with the name of the Branch and bearing the name of the person and the date upon which it was assigned, is put into a second file. When the annual reports with the lists of correspondents reach her each May, she checks with the cards previously prepared, notes changes of address, and, if she finds some people receiving cheer from too many Branches, attempts to regulate the condition. It will readily be seen that Branches are expected to continue the same correspondents year after year, unless they inform Mrs. McCaddin of the reason for dropping them.

Another important portion of Mrs. McCaddin's work is the editing of the column of appeals for the magazine. It is her intention not to print a request from any one person oftener than once a year. She reports thus, "In the past I have worried as to whether appeals were answered. I shall never worry thus again for I have found that one chairman cannot renew her subscription to the magazine because she is a little behind in answering *all* the appeals. From January, 1932, through December, 1933, she had answered every single one."

While Mrs. McCaddin's work is not spectacular, it is essential to the well being of the Exchange and we are very fortunate to receive her valuable assistance, which occupies much time.

The annual report of Mrs. Rachel Sands, chairman of the Home Study Committee, shows constructive teaching extended to worthy and distant pupils. There are 75 students upon the list, a decrease from last year; all these are seriously studying with definite goals in sight. Many others have been provided with needed books and special material. Sixty-two Branches, an increase over last year, have reported some work in this line. Some have sent modern school books, some have prepared suitable lessons, some have clipped and arranged articles from magazines, some have sent worth-while books of fiction at Christmas to students, while some have given money to purchase dictionaries, help pay postage, etc. The satisfying total of 1,305 books has been sent to pupils.

Some individual students are doing very creditable work. One such is a young girl in Georgia, studying art under a New York teacher. Another is a country boy of fourteen who has been doing systematic work since he was nine. An aged minister in Arkansas, interested in word derivation, is studying Greek. Three wives under the direction of northern teachers are helping their husbands. Several young people are studying music under a member of the committee in Keene, N. H. Two have applied to study French under the supervision of a member of the Church of the Disciples Branch.

I would call to your earnest attention one sentence in Mrs. Sands' report. "Our work stands upon a firm foundation; there is great opportunity for someone to build upon it." To my mind no finer thing could be accomplished than that during the coming year each Branch in

the country should add its mite to the building which Mrs. Sands has started and is passing on to other hands. Within the memory of the present generation there has never been a time, when a greater proportion of children have been unable to attend school a reasonable length of time, when more of the older boys and girls, ready for employment, have been unable to find any and so have been thrown upon their own resources, which could be greatly improved by further mental development, or when poorly equipped teachers have found it so impossible to raise the money to pay for needed courses. There is an opportunity for every Branch to help these temporarily unfortunate people through the channels of our Home Study Department.

The annual report of Mrs. Henry R. Bowser, chairman of the Library Committee, is so full of the record of satisfactory achievement and of hope for the future that it is an inspiration to read it. She stresses the ever-changing variety of the work of the Library Department, recalling the memorial library in the ranch country of Alberta, Canada, and the other in Wyoming, a library in Nova Scotia, "a college library in North Carolina rendered efficient"; all of which serve educated men and women. She mentions numerous consolidated and high schools, mostly in the southern mountains, which have been "provided with necessary library books in sufficient quantity to place them on the coveted *accredited list* of their states." Help in the form of reading matter has gone to one-room rural schools where children of all ages are educated together. The community library has not been dropped from our lists, for many of them are being supplied with books.

That Cheerful Letter workers in spite of their own decreased incomes remember the less fortunate is evidenced by the numbers in Mrs. Bowser's annual report. Forty-eight Branches in seven States, compared with 41 last year and 32 two years ago, are doing library work. One hundred and one libraries, of which 34 are new have been helped this season. They are situated in 20 states and one province of Canada. Thirty-one of these are in schools. A total of 6,968 volumes, including four complete sets of encyclopedias, 10,295 magazines, 4,094 picture post-cards, 163 miscellaneous items and three magazine subscriptions have been sent. Again this year Wellesley Hills has sent the greatest number of books with All Souls', New York a close second and Nantucket not far behind in the third place. It is interesting to consider similar accomplishment by the chairman from the big New York Branch, "where diverse outside interests tend to draw the people apart" and the chairman from the tiny island Branch, where the source of supply of books is relatively small. It is merely another case of "Where there's a will there's a way" and should serve as an example to many of us.

I have chosen from Mrs. Bowser's report two typical librarians. One is a teacher in a consolidated school in a small town to which are transported 265 children. She writes, "We are sorely in need of books. Our children are bright, ambitious, eager to read. I have taught here for many years. We look upon our work as a mission, not alone as a profession." Later, "A box of books reached us on the Good Saint Valentine's Day. The books are useful, valuable, every one. Our children are ravenous for books. You have no idea what a service you can render to the youth of this community by helping us to secure books. My whole soul is in this work; I wonder if you cannot catch the joy, even though miles intervene and be my friend and the friend of the children."

The second is "a woman in Montana, who describes the mountain scenery around her home, the lovely flowers, of which she picked twenty-five kinds in one bouquet last summer. She wants books to read to her blind husband in particular, and in general books for ages seventeen to seventy for her community of fifteen homes. It is to such as she, who can appreciate spiritual values, that we should minister."

Forward to page 18

CORRESPONDENTS AND APPEALS

MRS. JOHN A. MCCADDIN, *Chairman*, 21 Ashfield Street, Roslindale, Mass.

A correspondent writing to the Exchange for the first time should always give as reference the name and address of her minister.

When a correspondent moves to a new address, notice should be sent to Headquarters, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass., and to those persons who have been sending letters and reading matter.

It is necessary to state positively that the Cheerful Letter Exchange is not a "clothing bureau" and not a "charitable" society in the usual sense of the word.

It is contrary to the rules of the Cheerful Letter Exchange to allow any one to make use of its magazine by addressing letters asking for money, clothing, or other articles, to those whose names are printed in the paper. This prohibition includes requests to borrow money and the offering of articles for sale. The name of any person who disobeys this rule will be dropped from the list, and any one who receives a request of this description is desired by the Central Committee to return no answer, but to enclose the letter at once to the Chairman of this Department.

Many people do care for just the kind of friendly service for which we are organized. We limit our efforts to them and their wishes.

APPEALS

1. Mrs. W. C. Newton, R. 1, Box 107, Wadesboro, N. C., writes that she has not heard from any of the dear Cheerful Letter friends for years. She would enjoy reading and sewing to help pass the lonely hours.

2. As I am so sad and lonely, I think that it would help me to hear from some of the members of the Exchange. I lost my dear little boy last November, he was five years old. Would some one please send me some reading? Mrs. Fleta L. Smith, R. F. D. 2, Ridgway, Va.

3. I have three small children, a boy, 10 years, a girl, 8 years, and my little baby girl 4 years old. They are lots of company to me, but I can not buy the little books and cards they would like so much. The two oldest children go to school, and the little one stays home with me. I would love some pretty little cards for her to look at. My husband is a great reader and enjoys books. He is not very well. I need some new quilts but I haven't any pieces to make them with. I would be so glad if the Cheerful Letter Exchange could send us some pieces and reading. Mrs. Zera McAlexander, Endicott, Va.

4. I come again, again hoping to become a member of your Cheerful Letter Exchange. It would mean so much to me and my little ones if some one would send us a little cheer. I would appreciate it very much if some one would send a few pieces and thread, and some cards for the children. Mrs. Cordelia Howell, Jefferson, N. C.

5. Mrs. Susie M. Jones, R. 2, Fort Cobb, Okla., writes that her mother, Mrs. Janie Pruitt, passed away a year ago and she misses her very much. She would like some sewing and reading for the children and herself.

6. I am so lonesome I'm just wondering if it would be possible to receive a word of cheer from you. My parents are old and I am the only child except a little adopted boy and he is 123 miles away in the state hospital with T. B. of the spine. I am 23 years old and love all kinds of fancy work and good reading but am not able to afford it. If it would be possible I would appreciate receiving some more than I could express, but I am not asking for it, for if you could just send Billy a few things to cheer his little soul it would make me happy. He is seven years old. He has the nurses to write to me for him asking for toys, and it hurts me because I can't send hardly any. If you don't

have time for us though, I will love the work and you all just the same for the happiness you bring to others in need of cheerfulness. Annie E. Hayes, Moffitt, N. C.

7. Mrs. Sarah Jackson, R. 1, Peachland, N. C., wrote asking for cheer for her children and herself. Since her first letter she has injured her leg while splitting wood, and will be confined to the house for some time. She is a widow with four children, a boy, 12, and three girls, 10, 14, and 16 years old. They would enjoy some magazines and quilt pieces as the two oldest girls like to sew.

8. Mrs. Dan Miller, R. 1, Decatur, Tenn., writes to the Exchange for cheer. She is a widow, 73 years old. She gets very lonely and can't do much except sew and read. She would enjoy any cheer sent to her.

9. It has been many years since I wrote to the Exchange. I now have two small boys, one 7 years old who is going to school and the other one three years old. I would like to receive picture books, paint books, crayons or any kind of reading for small boys. Mrs. Dovie M. Ingram, Bassett, Va.

A PRAYER

O thou Spirit of graciousness and strength, thou who dost ever abide in the works of righteousness, we come here from all our various homes and different labors, with all our personal faults and needs and triumphs, to unite in the search for light upon our ways and a deeper peace within our souls. We are drawn here by the faith of human hearts; faith in a living spirit of universal tendency in which we may live securely and effectively; faith that by so living we will find inspiration and power to carry us onward with unflagging courage.

As we pause in contemplation today, we would be humble. We recall the mistakes and the failures which make the memory of our past life more painful, the weaknesses which have made us willing to see the triumph of evil rather than the abasement of ourselves. We know that passion and anger have led us to sin against the holy spirit of humanity. We have been selfish and proud and then have hidden our sins beneath the cloaks of self-expression or self-respect. And as we remember all these failures, may we come humbly to the spirit of the Publican of old, "O God, be merciful to me."

Where there are those who have need of the ministration of human sympathy, may we find them and minister unto them, not in the spirit of the strong helping the weak or the rich helping the poor, so much as in common understanding of the universality of human need, and even as one brother giveth help to another. May we sincerely say to those who are borne down under the weight and failures of the day, "Neither do I condemn thee," and by our faith, help to rebuild hopes, heighten ambitions, and make life good.

We would that our service today may be rich in significance for us, because our hearts are true. May we go back into the world of work and activity as those who have stood for a time on a spiritual height, whence has come visíon, understanding, hope, and strength. And may all the words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in thy sight. Amen.

(Written for Annual Meeting of the Cheerful Letter Exchange by Rev. Roscoe Trueblood, Harvard, Mass.)

The man who smiles when all goes well
And good things are coming his way,
Who's lucky in love, with plenty of cash
And never a bill to pay,
Is not in the class with you who laugh
When everything has gone wrong,
Who meets misfortune, but still comes up
Grinning or singing a song.
And so, my friends who are never downed,
But keep buoyant, gay, and free,
Who meet bad luck with dauntless pluck,
Accept this tribute from me!
I'm sure you'll win in the final count,
Though you may have lost today,
For the world must yield to you who smile
When luck hasn't gone your way.

ANNUAL REPORT OF SECRETARY

Forward from page 15

Won't everyone, who hears or reads this report, collect at least six readable books in good condition this summer? When you have done so, decide for what sort of library they are suited and write to Mrs. Bowser for an address to which you may send them. The effort and expense will not be too great and the result of providing good books for the discouraged and the lonely may be too vast for you even to imagine.

A North Carolina correspondent writes, "*The Cheerful Letter* has been coming to me for years, but I thank you just the same for the copy you sent me. I can give it to one of my friends. I enjoy it so much and read everything in it." That workers feel the magazine valuable is evidenced by the zeal with which many circulate the *sunshine bag*, the function of which is to collect money to pay the deficit for editing, publishing and mailing, which the modest subscription rate of fifty cents per year cannot meet. This year all such contributions have been handled through the office of the treasurer of the General Alliance and this businesslike method has been most satisfactory. Miss Edith L. Jones, our "sunshine collector" and long in charge of the distribution of sunshine bags still spurs chairmen on at monthly meetings to greater endeavors, with the result that up to the present time all magazine bills are paid and there is a surplus with which to meet at least partially the expenses of publication during the summer, which is a lean time with us. Thanks are due the Branches of Westford, Mass., and the Social Service Committee of Springfield, which made up a goodly number of the important little *sunshine bags*. Following is the honor roll of Branches contributing to the sunshine bags: All Souls', New York, Dorchester First, Wellesley Hills, Boston First, King's Chapel, Boston, Roxbury, Wollaston, Boston Second, Hingham, Waltham.

I wish that every Alliance in the country would subscribe to at least one copy of our magazine and encourage its members to read it. It is worthy of the attention of all. Let's adopt as a slogan, "A *Cheerful Letter Magazine* circulated in every Alliance Branch this year!"

Early in April calls for annual reports in the form of questionnaires were sent to all the Cheerful Letter chairmen listed in the Manual. From the unusual promptness with which the majority were returned, I have decided that most workers find this system satisfactory. May I say to the few, who have written to me that they were overwhelmed by my interrogations, that their less formal reports were acceptable. My main object is to find how many are participating in the work, although the more details I am told, the better. To the 155 chairmen, reporting, I send my thanks with the regret that time and strength do not permit me to acknowledge their co-operation personally.

A correspondent of the Northampton chairman writes, "I hope this year will be of much success to us all and that we can look on the sunny side of life. Really I believe if we could omit the habit of talking about the depression, times would seem better." While her advice is good, I feel that *I* may "talk about the depression" for I know that you will agree with me that the Cheerful Letter Exchange has worsted it, when you hear how our work has gone forward with the force of the united efforts of the Branches.

Again the committee of All Souls', New York, under the direction of its enthusiastic chairman has sent the largest total of articles. She has increased her last year's record by several thousand. The Wellesley Hills Committee holds a worthy second place with the First Congregational of Providence, R. I., a close third. Then follow in the order given: Hingham, Brookline First, San Francisco, Cal., Newport, R. I., Needham and Cambridge First.

A correspondent of mine, a teacher in an ungraded school in the Blue Ridge Mountains, writes, "When I entered my new school-room, I found not a single book in it. The children are pleased to death to know that I brought some with

me. I am going home and bring others which have been given me by Cheerful Letter friends. The floor of the room is sunken in the middle, splintery and full of cracks. I have no chair, table or desk." It is easy to visualize the homes from which the pupils in this school come and to know that few, if any books will be found in them. Yet parents, as well as children, love to read and volumes placed in school or community libraries, sent as helps to teachers and generously shared by them, or sent to individual families are veritable godsends. It is satisfying to record that books sent to correspondents, added to those sent under the direction of the Home Study and Library Departments, make a total of 10,293 volumes put into circulation this year. A Virginia correspondent of the Branch in Marietta, Ohio, who has a small circulating library in her home, wrote thus, "It was so stormy in March, I sure had to stay closely at home. The teachers and pupils came and got books. Some married ladies came Saturday to select a book; so you can see the books are being read and appreciated. I enjoy taking care of them." She also gave a record of the books lent during March, when twelve books were read by twenty-five people, "The Soul of a Bishop" being the most popular.

This year for all purposes 42,110 magazines were distributed. While this is a decrease from last year's record, it is an increase of 3,420 over that of 1931. Two hundred ninety-one subscriptions to magazines other than the *Cheerful Letter*, an increase of 82 over last year's record, were given to correspondents. Such subscriptions, which bring the assurance of a regular visit from the rural mail carrier, a variety of wholesome reading and attractive pictures, mean much to the isolated. That chairmen find this method advisable is evidenced by the following bit from the report of the one from Ayer: "I sent the subscription to *The Woman's Home Companion* to my correspondent as a Christmas gift, as remailing magazines comes so high." The man to whom the Winchendon chairman gave a subscription accepted it thus: "I couldn't resist the desire to write you a little note telling you how much I appreciate the fine books, *The Readers' Digest*. They are a great source of pleasure to me and of profit and enlightenment as well."

A southern correspondent of the Amherst chairman wrote, "I am glad that you do not feel old. I don't. There are too many good things for one to do to feel old. I have to wear glasses for I have done lots of needlework in my life and do fine quilting. I have quilted about six hundred quilts in the last ten years besides dressmaking." May I digress for a moment to quote in contrast from a letter of a twenty-seven year old Texas correspondent of the chairman from Salem Second: "I had a birthday the 12th of this month. Gee! But can't a person's age slip up on them."

The Lynn chairman sent a package of quilt scraps to a North Carolina correspondent and had this reply, "I received a large box from you today. I want to thank you for being so good to us. I don't see how we could have got quilts to keep us warm if it wasn't for you." The Needham chairman has a correspondent in Alabama, who was touchingly grateful in this wise for a package, "We received the most wonderful box and oh! how glad we were. I am so proud of my needles and thread, for thread was as scarce as needles with me. I had been drawing threads out of flour sacks to sew with, until I broke my last needle. So I just can't tell you how much I appreciate the thread, needles, buttons and fasteners. I patched all day Thursday trying to get each of the children a changing mended up." A correspondent of Salem Second Branch wrote, "Today I finished a pair of bedroom slippers. I made the insoles of two stiff pasteboards covered with heavy outing. I whipped soles of old inner tubes to these. I made the uppers of a nice sample of heavy blankets some one gave me. They are not pretty but nice and warm. I sure do appreciate your telling your friends I'd like velvet pieces. Thank you for the

thread to work my patchwork bath robe, too." To the Lebanon, N. H., chairman there came from Tennessee the following information, "I have been carding wool and spinning yarn. I am going to knit socks and stockings for the children. It is hard work but it all helps. My mother learned me to card and spin when I was about thirteen years old. We used to make a cotton web of cloth for summer and a web of wool cloth for winter and we had to spin the thread we wove. I have sat up until ten o'clock a many of a night. I would like to make some home made cloth again, if I was able, but I couldn't stand it now, for I am not so very stout."

It is with thankfulness that I am able to report that Branches have this year sent 2,074 packages of quilt scraps and 643 packages of sewing materials to correspondents. This is an increase of 61 per cent over last year. When our distant friends are so bravely bearing up under hardship, it is a privilege to lighten their labors a little.

A Virginia correspondent of the Hartford, Conn., Branch writes, "I was thinking perhaps we could exchange some flowers, if we had different kinds. I do like to get something new. Will you please tell me the kinds you'd *like* to have and I might have some you'd like and you might have some I'd like." An Arkansas correspondent of the same Branch recently wrote, "We have our garden all out. We planted beans, peas, tomatoes, cabbage, cucumbers, onions, Irish potatoes and sweet potatoes. If it would stay warm, we would soon have plenty to eat. My husband hasn't got his loan yet. If he don't, we can't plant any cotton, although his cotton ground is all ready. But maybe we can get by some way until garden stuff comes in. I always can stuff to last through the winter but last year didn't have much to can and I haven't as many jars as I need."

Which of us can measure the good, which the 276 packages of seed sent to correspondents did? The flower seeds brought beauty and relaxation to the recipients, while the vegetable ones helped keep bodies and souls together in many a harrassed family. I hope that very early next year a vastly greater number of seeds will go south and west. It seems to me that we might well send jar rubbers to the hard working mothers, who eke out their fare with their canning. With pennies very scarce much food is undoubtedly lost for the want of these.

A Colorado correspondent of the Amherst chairman writes, "My little girl likes the package very much. She is making a scrap book and the pictures were just lovely for it." A small girl wrote from North Carolina to the chairman from Community Church, N. Y., thus: "I know you are a dear, sweet lady. The scrap book and paper dolls I am so proud of. The nice dictionary you sent some time ago certainly has been lots of help at home and at school."

Evidently the 1,549 scrap books sent this year have been appreciated. This is a great increase in number over last year. Wellesley Hills leads in the number made, while those made by the Lynn chairman, carefully planned to appeal to people of varying ages and conditions are most attractive. Several chairmen have reported sending pictures, scissors, paste and blank books so that children might make their own.

More than fifty thousand cards have been sent to brighten drab homes, where the gay ones often find places upon the walls; to help teachers instruct their students in geography and history and to become the treasures of small children.

The Saskatchewan correspondent of the chairman from Hackensack, New Jersey, writes, "I've worked about 'steen cross word puzzles today. They surely teach one new words. I misread *iniquities* for *antiques* and puzzled my brain for an hour, when the answer seemed to be *sins*. I wondered if *sins* were really considered *antiques* and then I found I'd misread the word." Further on in the same letter she wrote, "I have some new recipes I've been wanting, one for hot tamales, one for pickled pigs' feet, and one for fruit soup. The hot tamales will have to wait until I get some corn husks

and I can't pickle the pigs' feet, until we kill him but nothing is better than fruit soup." Apparently those, who include in their clippings cross word puzzles and receipts and who choose with discretion their recipients, are filling a want and giving pleasure as well.

The following excerpt from a letter written to the chairman from the Evening Alliance of the Metropolitan District of New York might have come in slightly different form from dozens of others, "I was more than pleased with the package and everything. The kids said tell you they sure did thank you for sending the box for old Santa. It was the *only Christmas that we had.*"

Surely there was never a holiday season, when 1,069 Christmas boxes, an increase of 108 over last year, sent by Cheerful Letter workers, could have done more to raise the morale of those who received them, than last year's. To many a giver the preparation of one of these boxes is her greatest Christmas joy.

To the chairman for the Branch of the Community Church, New York, a South Dakota woman writes, "I should have written you before now to thank you for the lovely Christmas gift but I have been out of stamps so long I have not been able to answer any of my mail." A woman in Virginia, after telling the chairman for the West Roxbury Evening Branch of a son and daughter, who are working their way through college, writes, "My boys that were in high school got uneasy about home, and came home last Sunday night and back Monday morning. I had been without money to write them for a few weeks so they walked twenty miles."

If women, who are our correspondents, have no money to buy stamps for letters to their children by the week at a time, who of us ought once to complain when a parcel, which did not hold an addressed stamped envelope or postal, is not acknowledged? Personally I think that we ought to enclose letter paper as well. I hope that the chairmen, who failed to report the sending of stamps (and by the way they include about half the number), will mend their ways next year. With eggs selling at six cents a dozen and butter at ten cents a pound and with cotton and tobacco hardly able to be given away, many of our distant friends have practically no way of obtaining ready money. Let's not expect them to buy stamps, in order to write to us.

So far I have tried to give you an idea of our correspondents' attitude toward our work. Now I am going to consider briefly that of the Branch chairmen.

Very few have reported any breaking of the rule against the sending of money and clothing to correspondents. From the many calls from our own immediate localities none of us doubts the need of our far away acquaintances for these things. Where suffering has appeared to be acute, cases have been referred to local organizations, through Dr. Dexter's office. There has, however, seemed to be a very real desire for the things, which we may legitimately supply. The chairman from Rochester, New York, tells of a North Carolina woman, who has become "a valued friend." She is a marvelous spirit, who asks for nothing but cheerful letters. The Portland, Maine, chairman tells of two correspondents; one, a hopeless invalid and pitifully lonely, writes, "Life would be unendurable without your letters and books"; the other, writes from Colorado, "I am sure glad when letters come from you." A Virginia woman wrote to the chairman from the Church of Our Saviour in Brooklyn, "I think the Cheerful Letter a glorious thing for it brings us together tho' many miles apart." The chairman from Church of the Messiah, St. Louis, reports, "I could write a volume about my correspondents both young and old. The advice, which I give to girls in motherless homes, where several in their early teens are caring for younger children and keeping house for their fathers with self-sacrifice and devotion, is gratefully received. In letters received I have corrected mistakes in spelling, punctuation and grammar, often by using the same words correctly. It is simply amazing how quickly the young people learn.

My older correspondents are an inspiration, sincere, religious and so thankful for my letters." The chairman from Omaha, Nebraska, writes that "The satisfaction in touching the souls of these women I hear from is worth its weight in gold." It needs no comment from me to prove that there is still a call for our letters and that there are still Alliance women ready to write them.

The organization of Branch committees varies greatly. From reports taken at random I learn that the chairman from Billerica is a lone worker, who "eighty years young hopes to carry on as long as she lives," while the Roslindale committee consists of seven members. The Lexington committee chairman has very successfully divided the work into departments with a member at the head of each. Manchester, New Hampshire, Alliance has had some valuable publicity in the local paper, from which clipping I quote, "Twenty-five members of the Women's Alliance completed at their meeting in the Parish House a huge pile of scrap books, story books and valentines which will be sent to the mountain people of North Carolina. Pictures, cut from magazines, were pasted into cloth scrap books for the children, or made into framed pictures for the walls for the entire family. Continued stories were clipped from papers and pasted into story books." The chairman further reports that a similar afternoon was conducted in preparation for Christmas and that all work was prepared ahead by the chairman.

Increased postage rates have affected our work somewhat adversely. Here ingenuity may be used. The Chairman from Hartford, Conn., always encloses some clippings, as jokes, funnies or a poem, in every letter at no additional expense. Another chairman always sends a magazine in the middle of each bundle of scraps at small increased cost.

There are hopeful signs of co-operation from young people. The Peterborough, New Hampshire, Y. P. R. U. has "adopted a southern school." A Boy Scout Troop in Cambridge has sent to the troublesome son of a Virginia correspondent a full boy scout uniform and outfit and his mother writes that she wishes the northern boys might see the change which the tangible proof of someone's interest in him has wrought.

I regret that time does not permit me to record in detail the many thoughtful things which our workers have done for people in their own immediate vicinities. Especial attention has been lavished upon those who are unfortunate or discouraged. The chairman from Syracuse, New York, reports that the "library to which books, playing cards, magazines, jig saw puzzles, etc. have been given, is one in our church. The church school rooms have been opened through the week as rest and reading rooms for unemployed men. Here over eight hundred men have found shelter and amusement during the winter." A California Branch also does a delightful thing. Los Angeles Alliance serves a luncheon twice a month through the working year. At the first one in each month the Cheerful Letter Committee arranges a specially decorated table at which are seated those members, whose birthdays occur during that month. These *birthday luncheons* are very popular and are made individual by a member's reading an original poem in which each name is appropriately mentioned. Cards are sent to any members too old or ill to attend in their particular month.

I bring this, my tenth annual report, to a close with the firm conviction that neither adversity nor prosperity will ever stop the impetus of the forward sweep of the Cheerful Letter Exchange "onward and upward forever."

Respectfully submitted,
ETHEL LANE HERSEY, *Secretary.*

The fellow who boasts
That he says what he thinks,
Seldom thinks.

—*Sunshine Magazine.*

The real tragedy of life is not in being limited to one talent, but in the failure to *use* the one talent.

—*Edgar W. Work.*

WITH OUR BOYS AND GIRLS

THERE IS A GARDEN THAT I KNOW

By

ELLA KIRK JELLIFFE

There is a garden that I know
Wherein the loveliest flowers grow.
One day, the Queen of all, the Rose,
Her favorite maids of honor chose:
Sweet Pea, arrayed in violet,
The scented, modest Mignonette,
The Pansy clad in russet brown,
Alyssum in her pure white gown.

With these for fairest retinue
The Queen walked forth to see the view.
Her courtiers bowed adoringly,
Sweet William smiled quite charmingly,
Gladiolus, so grand and tall,
The bright Nasturtiums near the wall
Clove Pinks, blue Phlox—they all were seen
To bow in homage to their Queen.

And now, the cavalcade, in state,
Passes onward to the gate.
Invisible caps they quickly don
Before they wander on and on.
Then, crouching 'neath a tree, they see
Two children peering wistfully,
Talking of flowers they love the best
Describing how each one is dressed.

Quite soon the Queen turns back again—
She seeks the Garden Lady then
And whispers softly in her ear:
"Two little children linger near,
Looking for flowers, I heard them say;
I know you'll give them a bouquet."
The Lady listens with a smile,
Culling flowers all the while,

Until she reached the garden wall
From where the children heard her call,
"Come in, my children; come, my dears,
Watch me use my garden shears."
They shyly enter, hand in hand,
And think they've found a fairyland;
But when she fills their arms with flowers
They cry with joy, "Are these all ours?"

While searching for the ideal friend, it is well to be one.

JUST KEEP ON CLIMBING

Steven lived at the foot of a high mountain. It was so high that the top of it was usually hidden in the clouds so that he hardly ever saw it. Day after day he would look at that mountain and wonder about the top of it. One day he asked his mother, "Mother, could anybody climb to the top of that mountain?"

His mother smiled and said, "Yes, son, all that you would need to do is to keep right on climbing. You can get almost anywhere by taking steps enough."

The years passed and the time came when Steven faced another mountain that he wanted very much to climb. It was the mountain of an education. He was past twelve and had not had a chance to get an education. He wanted one very much. It looked impossible. He was too old to begin.

Into his mind flashed those words of his mother, "You can get almost anywhere by taking steps enough." He bought a spelling book and a grammar and started climbing the mountain of education. He took step after step until he had climbed to the position of professor in a large university.

Some of you may have the idea that it takes some special gift to climb the mountains of life. It does not. It requires only taking steps enough. If you were going to climb the highest mountain in America, you would start exactly the same way you would when you climb the stairs to your room. You put one foot ahead of the other and climb. The only difference is that it takes more steps to reach the top of the mountain than to reach the top of the stairs.

That is the only secret of getting to high places in life. The young folks who have been willing to take steps enough are the ones who reach the top.
—*What To Do,* in *Sunshine Magazine.*

Our little boy friend wants to know why vitamins were put in spinach and cod liver oil instead of in cake and candy.
—*Sunshine Magazine.*

WOOD FIRE

There is a sound outside the door
Of firewood dropped to the floor,
Of heavy wood and heavy feet,
And on the window driving sleet:
Inside we fumble for a match,
"Surely this one will make it catch!
It ought to catch! Yes, now it will!"
And, breathlessly, the house is still—
Then all the brasses in the room
Come out like fireflies from the gloom.
The big logs settle into place,
And vivid shreds of golden lace
Hang trembling on the blackened brick;
The eager flame, springing to lick
The shadows from the dusky wall,
Consumes them, too, and embers fall
And smolder in a molten heap—
Another log will make them leap
Into new strength, and throw once more
A magic carpet on the floor.

—*Edna H. Howe.*

A bright, young lawyer pleading for his client on trial for burglary: "Your Honor, the evidence shows my client did not enter the room at all. He merely inserted his arm through an open window and took a few trifles. His arm being only a small part of himself, why should you cause his whole body to suffer because of one offending member?"

"Very well," said the Judge, with a twinkle in his eye, "your logic is good. I therefore sentence your client's arm to one year in jail. Your client may accompany it or not as he pleases."

Whereupon the defendant unscrewed his cork arm, laid it on the Judge's desk and walked out.

If you would not be forgotten as soon as you are dead, either write things worth reading or do things worth writing.—*Franklin.*

THE CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE

MRS. HARRY A. STEVENS, *Chairman*, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.
MISS ETHEL L. HERSEY, *Secretary*, Hingham, Mass.
MISS EDITH L. JONES, *Treasurer*, 65 Langdon Street, Cambridge, Mass.

Meetings at 25 Beacon Street, Boston, at 10.30 A.M. the first Friday of each month from October to May inclusive.

ITS PURPOSE

To cheer and comfort those who are ill, lonely, or discouraged, and to give to those living far from a church some of the inspiration of the printed word by the publication of one good sermon, or similar article in each issue of the *Cheerful Letter Magazine.* Only such simple religious truths and principles as are agreed upon by all churches are printed.

To help those who live far from schools, or who wish to continue their studies by means of correspondence with a teacher.

To establish Circulating Libraries in isolated communities, schools, and colleges in rural and mountain districts where public libraries and other educational privileges are not available.

WHERE TO WRITE

Letters containing subscriptions to the paper, fifty cents a year, and *money from the Sunshine Bags* should be sent to the Cheerful Letter Exchange, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. Checks or postal orders should be made payable to the Cheerful Letter Exchange.

Letters asking for correspondents and appeals to be printed in the Cheerful Letter Magazine should be sent to Mrs. John A. McCaddin, *Chairman*, 21 Ashfield Street, Roslindale, Mass.

Letters asking for help in studying at home should be sent to Mrs. Isaac Sprague, Jr., *Chairman*, Wellesley Hills, Mass.

Letters about the establishment of Circulating Libraries should be sent to Mrs. Henry R. Bowser, *Chairman*, 20 Clark Road, Wellesley Hills, Mass. A circulating Library will be started in any small community that is in need of one, if proper location and care can be furnished and satisfactory references given.

WEEKS & DOTEN CO
BOSTON, MASS